



## Springfield Celebrates 125 Years

When Elias Briggs built his cabin on the east bank of the Willamette River in 1849, the city of Springfield was just a twinkle in his eye. But Briggs was a visionary, and within the next three decades he and other settlers established a community complete with schools, churches, commercial districts, and a burgeoning lumber industry. On Feb. 25, 1885, the city of Springfield was incorporated, formalizing what Springfielders already knew: Springfield had grown up and come into its own. This year we commemorate the 125th anniversary of that date. Join us as we take a look at how Springfield has grown since its inception: what makes it unique, what is little known about it, and which celebrities put it on the map.

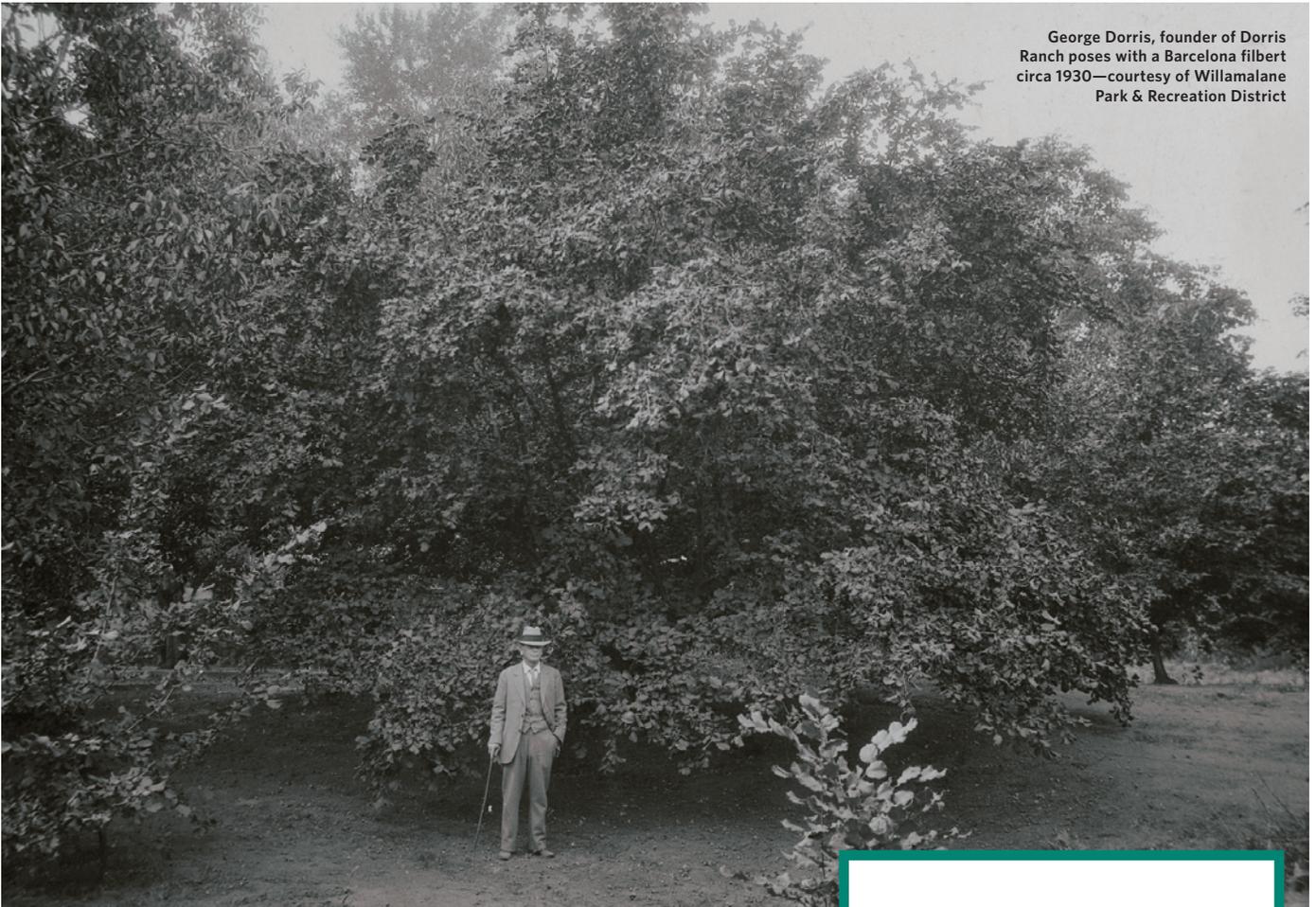


**DON'T MISS OUR BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION! JULY 16TH-18TH AT ISLAND PARK**



Weyerhaeuser is pleased to be a part of Springfield's proud past and bright future. We are happy to support the printing of this special history piece on the occasion of Springfield's 125th Anniversary.

George Dorris, founder of Dorris Ranch poses with a Barcelona filbert circa 1930—courtesy of Willamalane Park & Recreation District



## *Uniquely Springfield*

**PARIS HAS THE EIFFEL TOWER.** Seattle has the Space Needle. What makes Springfield different from other cities? You might be surprised.

Springfield has a spectacular regional medical center and the first filbert ranch in the country. Springfield had the trailer where legendary runner Steve Prefontaine lived. Springfield may or may not have been where Bill Bowerman used his wife's waffle iron to create the first Nike shoes in 1972. But, without a doubt, this Springfield served as the name inspiration for Matt Groening's Springfield in *The Simpsons*.

The people of Springfield are the heart and soul of our community. Within our City you can find stunning examples of nature, burgeoning industries and wonderful history, but it will always be the people that make our city great.

SID LEIKEN,  
MAYOR OF SPRINGFIELD

Springfield's three bridges over the Willamette River circa 1911—courtesy of Lane County Historical Museum





Eugene and Springfield share this remarkable part of our state and nation. Together, we are working to ensure that this remains a great place to live and raise our families, where we honor our histories, embrace our future possibilities and have fun doing it.

KITTY PIERCY,  
MAYOR OF EUGENE

businessmen paid Ben Holladay to reroute the tracks through Eugene. Springfield didn't get a railroad until 1891, when Southern Pacific built a depot and began carrying local lumber across the country.

The Stick Chalet-style depot is the oldest one of its type remaining in Oregon. When the building faced demolition in 1993, a local foundation raised funds to move it to South A Street, where it houses the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce and functions as an Oregon Tourist Information Center.

### Dorris Ranch

The beautiful Dorris Ranch at South 2nd and Dorris streets is a Springfield treasure. Originally settled by the William Masterson family in 1851, it has since become Oregon's oldest working filbert farm and its first living history farm.

In 1892, gentleman farmer George Dorris and his wife Lulu bought the land and

### The Lost Wagon Train

This story should be a movie. In 1853, Elias Briggs and friends hoped to increase local settlement by financing construction of a cutoff from the Oregon Trail. They paid to have a road to the upper Willamette Valley surveyed and built by fall, in time for that year's influx of travelers.

In July, settler Elijah Elliot took the Oregon Trail back to meet his family en route. He promised to bring a wagon train to the valley on the new cutoff, even though he had never seen it.

Elliot gathered about 1000 emigrants in 200 wagons. He didn't know the route was barely marked, let alone cleared. The group circled lost in the desert, then had to cut through thick forests on steep slopes. Winter was coming and they were starving.

Finally, a young emigrant, Martin Blanding, rode ahead and found the small settlement

of Lowell. Settlers from throughout the valley came to the rescue. Approximately half the newcomers stayed to live locally, greatly expanding the population.

Tiny Springfield now needed a school. Agnes Stewart, a young woman from the Lost Wagon Train, became the first teacher.

### Southern Pacific Depot

According to local history, the Oregon and California Railroad was about to build through Springfield in 1871 when Eugene

## Springfield Timeline

1851  
Floods reveal a channel off the Willamette River, inspiring the enterprising Elias Briggs to build the Springfield millrace.

1852  
The Briggs family constructs a sawmill and flour mill, providing the foundation for Springfield's early industrial and economic growth.

1854  
Springfield's first school opens, with Agnes Stewart, a settler from Pennsylvania and survivor of the Lost Wagon Train, as its first teacher.

1875  
A covered wooden bridge replaces the Briggs Ferry, but not for long: it will be swept away and rebuilt twice before 1891.



Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend

experimented with filbert trees. Besides growing the first filberts, they shipped young trees throughout the country, initiating the U.S. filbert industry.

Willamalane Park and Recreation District has owned the ranch since 1972 and schedules activities to teach students about Lewis and Clark, the Kalapuyas, trappers and pioneers.

### Booth-Kelly Lumber Company

Settlers thought they were coming to the area to be farmers, but some of them grew rich as lumbermen. Lumber mills were among the first large enterprises here. Although Weyerhaeuser had bought 31,000 acres of Lane County forests by 1907, the major local lumber company at that time was Booth-Kelly, founded in 1895.

By 1910 Booth-Kelly employed 1000 workers, equivalent to half of Springfield's population. In the Mohawk Valley, the company built the mill town of Wendling and other flourishing operations.

Weyerhaeuser opened its Springfield mill complex in 1949. Lane County became known as the timber capital of the world and Springfield was dubbed Lunch Bucket City.

### Wet Versus Dry

Between 1910 and 1913 hundreds of Eugeneans regularly paid six cents to take electric streetcars to Springfield's nine bars. Eugene had a prohibition ordinance while Springfield remained "wet," with more bars than churches. A sheriff often rode back to Eugene on the streetcar to make sure inebriated men didn't disturb any women onboard. Eugene resumed "wet" status in 1913 and Springfield went "dry" in 1915. What a bunch of contrarians!

### Nike's Birthplace?

Eugene has Hayward Field. Springfield has a metal shed where Nike shoes were invented. Well, maybe. Actually, the building has been dismantled and only the concrete pad remains at the end of South B Street. Whether UO coach Bill Bowerman developed

his revolutionary "Moon" shoe there is up for debate. But if Eugene is Track Town, Springfield must be Track Town East.

This is where Steve Prefontaine, one of the greatest athletes of all time, lived in a modest trailer. Olympians Maria Mutola, Annette Peters and Bill Dellinger made their homes here. Current track star Nick Symmonds lives here. Clearly Springfield played a major role in the development of track, its stars and maybe even its shoes.

### Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend

There isn't a more beautiful location in all of Lane County than the site of the new Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend. This ideal setting beside the McKenzie River in north Springfield affords spectacular views from every room.

Inaugurated August 10, 2008, the enormous regional complex provides more than 2,000 jobs and offers the latest medical practices and equipment.



Springfield's sense of humor was on display during 2007's Simpsons challenge

### Plaque from Matt Groening

In case you had any doubts about the origin of the world-famous Springfield where the Simpson family lives, humorist Matt Groening has given our city a plaque confirming that Springfield, Oregon, was indeed his inspiration for that other Springfield.

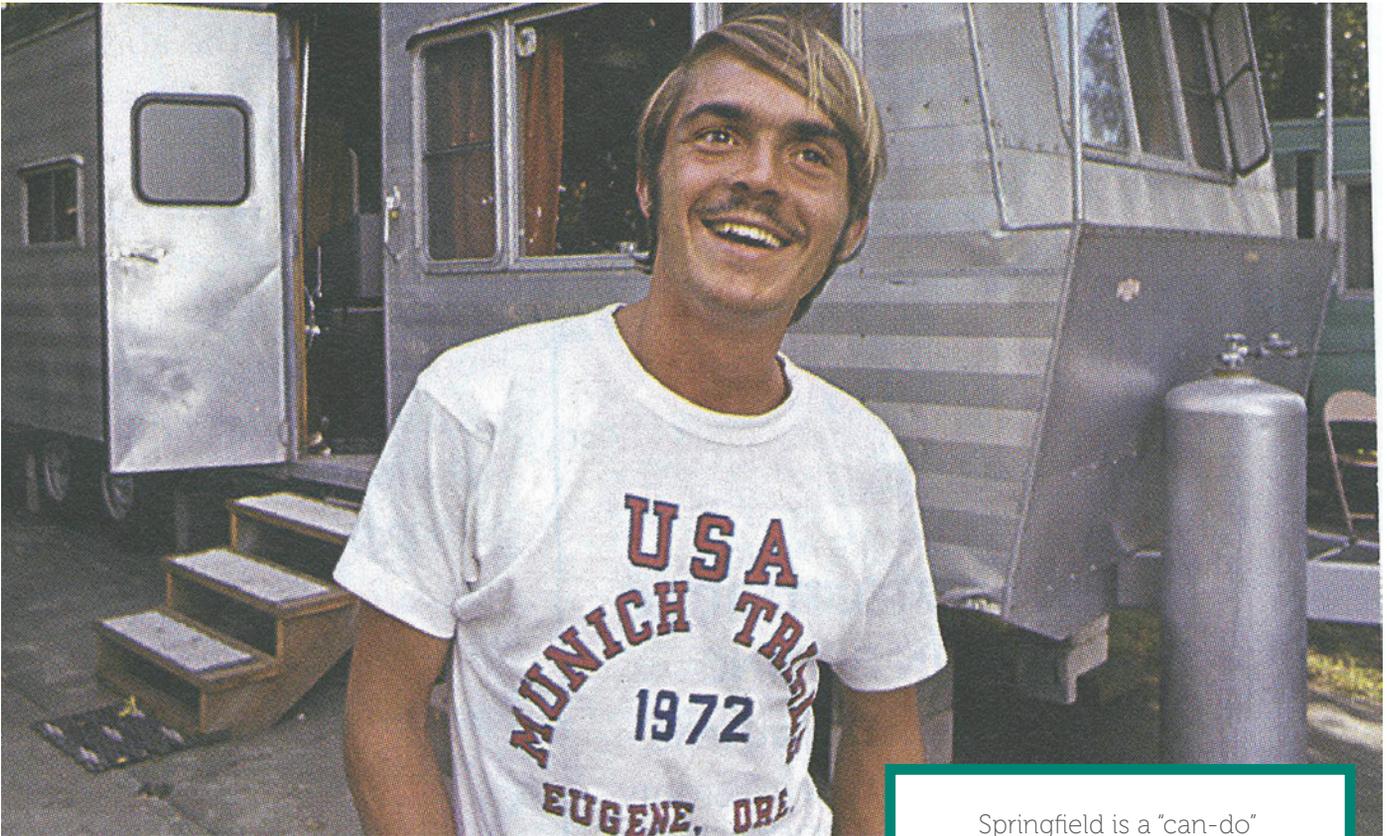
1891  
All aboard! Springfield finally gets a railroad when Southern Pacific comes to town and builds a depot that houses a Western Union telegraph office.

1892  
George Dorris purchases the property that becomes the Dorris Ranch, which to this day continues to grow hazelnuts (or "filberts" to purists).

1893  
Springfield becomes official when it adopts a City Charter.

1895  
Two sets of brothers - Robert and Henry Booth, and George and Tom Kelly - establish the Booth-Kelly Lumber Company.

1900  
Springfield's first hospital, Springfield Private Hospital, opens just in time to provide care for laborers in the growing (and dangerous) lumber industry.



The epitome of cool, one-time Glenwood resident, Steve Prefontaine still inspires the runner in all of us

## Springfield Celebrities

**SURE, HOLLYWOOD AND NEW YORK CITY** are hot spots for celebrity sightings, but Springfield has produced a surprising number of famous people. Don't mind the paparazzi as we take this tour of prominent Springfielders.

Eugene may be Track Town, USA, but some of track and field's brightest stars have called Springfield home. **BILL DELLINGER**, a Springfield High School graduate and Thurston High School track coach, won a bronze medal for the 5000 meter race in the 1964 Olympic games. Dellinger began coaching at the University of Oregon in 1967, where he mentored the legendary **STEVE PREFONTAINE**, also a Springfielder. Prefontaine, perhaps the most influential athlete in Oregon's history, set American records in all seven distance races between 2000 and 10,000 meters.

Another UO notable who made her way to Springfield: **ANNETTE PETERS**, a former American record holder for the 5,000 meter race and the first woman to break the 15-minute barrier in that event. In addition to winning an NCAA Championship while a Duck, Peters competed in three World Championships and one Olympic game.

Recently retired: **MARIA MUTOLA**, widely considered the greatest female 800 meter runner of all time. A native of Mozambique, Mutola moved to Springfield in 1991 to attend Springfield High School and train under track coach Margo Jennings. She won 14 World Championships, competed in five Olympic games, and won an Olympic gold medal.

Springfield is a "can-do" community. There's a practical, problem-solving approach to things. Whether we work with schools, businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, community volunteers or the City, the attitude is, "Let's see how can we make this work." People here like to get things done.

JULIE DANIEL, EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR  
BRING RECYCLING

1901  
A new boss in town: Booth-Kelly Lumber purchases and dismantles the Springfield sawmill, replacing it with a larger mill.

1903  
The Springfield News is established, reporting on Springfield happenings until it closes in 2006.

1903  
Telephone service, both local and long-distance, comes to Springfield.

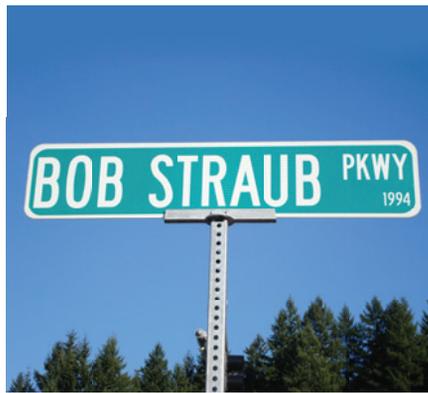
1906  
Springfield installs a public water system, followed by a sewage system the next year. Grateful residents no longer have to trek through mud and rain to outhouses.

1910  
New electric streetcars do a brisk business transporting Eugene drinkers to Springfield after Eugene opts to become a "dry" community.

Currently in training: **NICK SYMMONDS**, a former Willamette University standout who made his mark in the 800 meter race after only three appearances in international competition. He has twice won both the Pre Classic title and the U.S. outdoor title, and he reached the semifinals in the 2007 World Championships and the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Can movie goers thank Springfield for Dirty Harry? That's right, film star **CLINT EASTWOOD** was once a resident of Springfield. After graduating from high school in Oakland, California in 1948, Eastwood headed to the Northwest, where he spent about a year felling trees and working in the sawmill for Weyerhaeuser. But Dirty Harry had a dirty little secret: he wasn't tough enough for Springfield's winters. "... [I]n the Willamette Valley, it's beautiful, but in the winter it socks in. You go six, maybe seven months without seeing blue," Eastwood said in a 1974 interview. Perhaps it was Springfield's clouds that drove him to sunny Hollywood.

Not many cities can boast an author who has written not one, but two, contenders for the great American novel. **KEN KESEY**, a 1953 Springfield High School graduate, achieved instant celebrity when he published *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* in 1962, followed by *Sometimes a Great Notion* in 1964. He lived his life with the same daring he brought to his fiction. After graduating from the University of Oregon in 1958, he entered a graduate program at Stanford University. In 1964, he and a group of bohemian friends, calling themselves the Merry Pranksters, traveled across the country in a 1939 bus named "Further." Yet it is his writing that assures him immortality. With his masterful, masculine prose, Kesey had a gift for capturing both time and locale, earning him a place in the pantheon of great American writers.



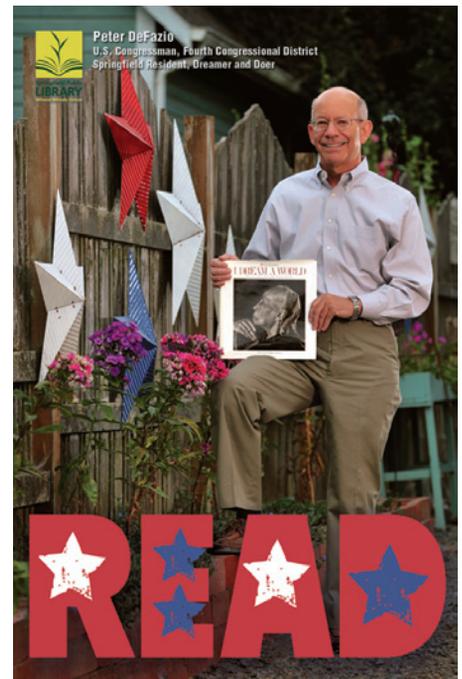
Politicians are products of their times, but **ROBERT STRAUB**, Springfielder and Oregon governor from 1975-79, would have found himself right at home in today's "green" political climate. Straub began his political career in 1954 as a Lane County Commissioner, followed by a term as state senator. As Senator Straub, he supported legislation that protected Oregon's natural resources, such as the Oregon Beach Bill and the Willamette Greenway Plan. Similarly, Straub's gubernatorial career was marked by environmentally and socially progressive policies: he strengthened land use and energy laws; he helped launch Portland's light-rail system; and he increased basic school support and expanded state support for rehabilitation and employment of the disabled.

Democrat and Springfielder **PETER DEFAZIO** entered politics in 1977 as an aide for U.S. Representative Jim Weaver. He was elected Lane County Commissioner in 1983 and succeeded Jim Weaver in his House seat in 1986. Since then he has been re-elected 11 times, mostly in landslide wins. He is a senior member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee where he serves as Chairman of the Highways and Transit Subcommittee, and also serves on the Aviation and Railroad Subcommittees.



**ABOVE:** In 1957 the Springfield Chamber of Commerce sponsored an experiment in downtown revitalization called Shopper's Paradise. For one week in August the city closed Main Street to traffic and created a temporary pedestrian mall. Ed Harms, the city's mayor, inaugurated the event.

**BELOW:** Peter DeFazio, featured in the Springfield Library's 2009 READ poster collection



**1911**  
The Booth-Kelly mill, which employed half the Springfield community, burns down.

**1912**  
Springfield officially designates its first public library in City Hall.

**1912**  
Economic recovery begins when Booth-Kelly rebuilds its mill and 1,000 employees return to work.

**1915**  
The Mayor declares Prohibition in Springfield. Drinkers make their way over to Eugene, which resumed "wet" status in 1913.

**1932**  
The Depression takes its toll on Springfield: the last bank in town closes, leaving the city without a bank until 1940.



What impresses me most about Springfield is the teamwork I encounter there. Its core group of leaders have been inspirational and have really achieved results. That can-do attitude energizes me every time I go to a meeting. I predict the city's success going forward will owe a lot to this spirit of cooperation."

BRIDGET D. BAKER, DIRECTOR  
CORPORATE PUBLIC RELATIONS  
THE REGISTER-GUARD

## Secret Springfield

**SECRETS CAN LAST FOR JUST SO LONG**, and then they disappear with those who carried them. Once in a while, however, a forgotten chest comes out of an attic and we learn more about the people who created our city; we learn about the ground under our feet.

Like the History Detectives on television, John Tamulonis, the city of Springfield's development manager, gathers Springfield's secrets in an effort to answer questions and dispel mysteries. Here are some questions answered, and some that remain mysterious.

**MAIN STREET.** What was Springfield's first main road? No, not Main Street. The prime real estate was along Mill Street, paralleling the river, which served as a major transportation route when the water was high enough. The ferry landed near Mill Street and a succession of mills operated there.

**A SPRING IN A FIELD.** You probably know that Elias Briggs named Springfield for a bubbling spring on his donation land claim in 1848. What's unusual is that he didn't name it for a Springfield in the East. While many Oregon pioneers named their settlements after the ones they left behind, Elias simply chose a plain, practical name.

**1940s**  
The national economy is thriving again, and Springfield's timber industry is booming, with Weyerhaeuser, Rosboro, Springfield Plywood and others opening for business.

**1944**  
Willamalane (a combination of the words "Willamette" and "Lane") Park and Recreation District is formed.

**1950**  
After more than two years of heated debate over publicly owned power, the city forms the Springfield Utility Board.

**1955**  
McKenzie-Willamette Hospital (now McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center) opens its doors to the Springfield community.

**1960-61**  
Springfield annexes the Thurston area, tripling the size of the city.



PROUD HISTORY  
BRIGHT FUTURE

Happy 125th Springfield! Our city is all about family and community. I grew up in Springfield and have raised my family here. The city has grown and changed over the years, but its down-to-earth people and friendly neighborhoods remain the same. That's why I love this town!

STATE REPRESENTATIVE,  
TERRY BEYER

**THE LOST ARCH.** The Springfield welcome arch, remembered in photos taken during massive flooding in 1927, was located in Glenwood, then also called West Springfield, on Franklin Boulevard at 19th Avenue where the railroad overpass is today. That site may not seem like a grand entrance to Springfield, but it was on the old stage road. Funding from the Ladies Civic Club paid for the elegant brick arch.

**CONTROVERSIAL STATUES.** Most people call it the Indian statue. It's really a pioneer with a flag, welcoming you to the western entrance of the city. The Springfield Jaycees hired Charles Forrester, who received a master's degree in art from the University of Oregon, to create his Pioneer Spirit statue for the state's centennial. They dedicated the work on Jan. 23, 1960.

#### SPRINGFIELD'S OLDEST LANDMARKS.

The enterprising Elias Briggs and his father Isaac built the millrace, a sawmill and a flour mill in 1852-54. More mills followed, but only the millrace remains today, a reminder that Springfield was sometimes called Miller City.

Researchers at the Dorris Ranch recently excavated a kiln from the 1850s. William and Eliza Masterson originally claimed the land in 1851, and volunteers constructed a replica of their tiny log home in 2008.

The Pioneer Cemetery at South 4th and C streets, now called Cemetery Park, was first used in the 1850s.

What may be Springfield's oldest remaining building wasn't even in Springfield when it was constructed in 1864. The Gray House, built by Frederick L. Gray, is in the Thurston area on the former stage road to Walterville.

The Robert E. Campbell house on Aspen Street, an attractive gothic-style farmhouse, dates from 1873 on Campbell's 1851 Donation Land Claim.

**BEST VIEWS IN SPRINGFIELD.** We live surrounded by natural beauty, but Willamette Heights Park features an especially pleasing vista of the Willamette River to the south. In the park is a large white obelisk with a blue S painted on each side.

Kelly Butte Park affords panoramic views of the Cascades to the east and the Coast Range to the west. A few steps west of tiny Millrace Park is a picture-perfect view of the millrace as it enters the Willamette River. With luck, you can watch a heron catching dinner.

1974  
Springfielder Robert Straub is elected Governor of Oregon, serving a four-year term.

1979-81  
Despite the national recession, Springfield welcomes the Willamalane Adult Activity Center, a new City Hall and library, and the Springfield Museum.

1985  
One hundred years of existence! Springfield celebrates its centennial.

1990  
A new retail center, the neon-decorated Gateway Mall, opens its doors.

2008  
Springfield becomes a leader in medical care: the Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend, a new state-of-the-art facility opens to the public.

